



*Office of the United States Attorney  
District of Arizona*

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## **WHITERIVER, ARIZ. MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR BRUTAL 2005 MURDER**

### *Accomplices received 25 - 30 year sentences*

PHOENIX – Jeremy Hoffman, 23, of Whiteriver, Ariz., was sentenced here yesterday to life in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Martone. Gallason Cheney, 27, and Carlton James, 27, also of Whiteriver, were each sentenced to 30 years in prison and Blanca Herrera, 30, of Glendale, Ariz., received a sentence of 25 years in connection with the brutal murder of Martha Bones on July 2, 2005. All four defendants pleaded guilty in to Second Degree Murder.

U.S. Attorney Diane J. Humetewa stated that “the senseless and brutal nature of this murder shows that these violent criminals had no regard for human life. The commitment of the law enforcement agencies that conducted the investigation leading to this prosecution are to be commended for their tireless efforts on behalf of the victim, her surviving family and the community. This was a horrible example of the devastating effects of methamphetamine use.”

On July 2, 2005, on the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation, Hoffman was at his residence when he noticed the victim, Martha Bones. Since he did not recognize her, Hoffman thought that she had been sent by a law enforcement agency to gather information about his drug selling operation. Over the course of the evening he repeatedly struck her and screamed at her that she was a snitch. Eventually, he helped carry her to the bathroom where the assaults continued and he threatened to kill her as he demanded to know who had sent her.

At some point, the victim was tied up by Hoffman and Herrera and then was wrapped in plastic sheets. Cheney placed a plastic shopping bag over the victim’s head in an attempt to suffocate her. When that didn’t work, Hoffman removed his belt and wrapped it around her neck and tried to choke her. Hoffman even asked for help because the victim would not die. At that time James took the free end of the belt and tied it to the bathroom door and then he and Cheney took turns standing on the victim’s neck. Hoffman then poured bleach down the victim’s throat to be sure she was dead. After they were convinced she was dead they wrapped her in a sleeping bag, dug a hole in Hoffman’s back yard and buried the victim. Herrera then cleaned up the blood in the bathroom and removed those items from the house.

Bones’ body was found a week later in a shallow grave outside of Hoffman’s residence. The medical examiner determined that the cause of death was asphyxiation. The joint investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the White Mountain Apache Tribal Police and the Show Low Police Department.

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During sentencing, Hoffman pleaded for leniency because he claimed that he was under the influence of methamphetamine at the time of the attack. The Judge rejected that request. Furthermore, the Judge described it as a slow, prolonged, agonizing murder and found Hoffman primarily responsible for her death.

The prosecution was handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-729-PCT-FJM  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-134(Hoffman, et al)

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